

CLAIMS**CONFIDENTIAL**

1. A method of representing historical records of data backup activity from a plurality of data backup products in a format that enables this information to be cross-referenced, consolidated, and compared comprising:
 - (a) providing a computer network with data backup activity performed by a plurality of data backup products each with its own clients and servers,
 - (b) providing a host computer interfaced to said network,
 - (c) providing said host computer is running a software device or program that includes said method as one of its software components,
 - (d) providing for each data backup product a backup engine plug-in that will obtain historical records of data backup activity from that data backup product,
 - (e) providing historical records of data backup activity expressed as a canonical backup log containing backup job records including:
 - i. a date and time that a data backup attempt or operation took place, and
 - ii. a proprietary name of the data backup client, and
 - iii. a fully qualified host name of the data backup client, and
 - iv. a number of bytes that were backed up or default value, and
 - v. a number of files or objects that were backed up or a default value, and
 - vi. a proprietary data backup level name or a default value, and
 - vii. a canonical data backup level name or a default value, and
 - viii. a description of where the information in the data backup job record was obtained, and
 - ix. a number of seconds that elapsed during the data backup operation or a default value, and
 - x. a number of errors or a default value, and
 - xi. a date and time the data backup will expire or default value, and
 - xii. a logical target name, and
 - xiii. a media label of the storage media the data backup was written to,
 - (f) providing a request for the said canonical backup activity log from a said software device or program, whereby said method will make available to said software device or program said canonical backup activity log in response to the asynchronous requests made by said software device or program.

2. A device for obtaining historical records of data backup activity from a plurality of data backup products in a format that enables this information to be cross-referenced, consolidated, and compared comprising:

- (a) a computer network with data backup activity performed by a plurality of data backup products each with its own clients and servers,
 - (b) a host computer interfaced to said network,
 - (c) said host computer running a program that includes said device as one of its software components,
 - (d) a plurality of data backup products,
 - (e) a specific backup engine plug-in for each said backup product,
 - (f) historical records of data backup activity from each specific data backup product,
 - (g) canonical backup activity logs including:
 - i. a date and time that a data backup attempt or operation took place, and
 - ii. a proprietary name of the data backup client, and
 - iii. a fully qualified host name of the data backup client, and
 - iv. a number of bytes that were backed up or a default value, and
 - v. a number of files or objects that were backed up or a default value, and
 - vi. a proprietary data backup level name or a default value, and
 - vii. a canonical data backup level name or a default value, and
 - viii. a description of where the information in the data backup job record was obtained, and
 - ix. a number of seconds that elapsed during the data backup operation or a default value, and
 - x. a number of errors or default value or a default value, and
 - xi. a data and time the data backup will expire or a default value, and
 - xii. a logical target name, and
 - xiii. a media label of the storage media the data backup was written to,
- (g) a request for the said canonical backup activity log from a said program, whereby said device will make available to said program said canonical backup activity log in response to the asynchronous requests made by said program.

3 A method for extending the use of the of said invention to obtain historical records of data backup activity from a previously unsupported backup product, comprising:

- (a) providing a computer network with data backup activity performed by a said previously unsupported data backup product with its own clients and server,
- (b) providing a host computer interfaced to said network,

- (c) providing said host computer is running a software device or program that includes said method as one of its software components,
- (d) providing for the said data backup product a backup engine plug-in that will obtain historical records of data backup activity from said data backup product,
- (e) providing the said canonical backup activity log format described in claim 1 whereby said method will make available to said software device or program said canonical backup activity log in response to the asynchronous requests made by said software device or program.